

TO: Labor and Public Employees Committee

DATE: February 15, 2007

**RE: Raised Bill No. 7034, An Act Concerning Collective Bargaining Rights
For In-Home State Subsidized Day Care Providers**

Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Terry Forde and I am a family child care provider in New Britain, Connecticut.

I urge you to support Raised Bill Number 7034, **AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR IN-HOME STATE SUBSIDIZED DAY CARE PROVIDERS.**

My wife and I care for nine children each day in our home. I have training in nutrition and provide a healthy breakfast and lunch for the kids who are there each day. The infants get plenty of the social time and educational play they need to grow and learn, and we help the school aged kids get ready for school in the morning and help them with their homework in the afternoons. By the time their parents pick them up, they've finished their homework and my wife and I have checked it over and given extra help where they need it. That way their parents have more time to concentrate on other important parts of their child's life

Teaching and caring for kids is probably the most worthwhile challenge there is. But there are other challenges and obstacles to providing good quality child care that just don't make sense. Without the freedom to bargain with the State of Connecticut, there is no good way to overcome these obstacles.

The reimbursement rates that we receive from the state don't fully cover the cost of providing quality care to a child. Food, educational materials, toys and everything else has to come out of those rates and parent co-payments. Child care is one of the biggest costs that parents have to pay, and a lot of times they can't afford the co-payments. Sometimes they will ask if they can pay me late, or pay a little now and the rest later. Since my interest is in making sure their kids get the care they need, I can't tell them no, I won't take care of a child until I get your co-payment.

One good example is the child I care for who lives with foster parents. I provide care for that child from 11am to 5pm. Because that's less than eight hours, the state considers it part time and the parents' co-pay jumps to over \$700 a month.

I am excited about the work that SEIU is doing to bring improvements for child care providers and the families that depend on us – that's why I am working with other providers in Connecticut's family child care union, SEIU Local 2001.

In the long run, nothing should be more important to us than the health, well-being and development of our children, and we all need to work together to make sure they get the care and education they need. Granting us the freedom to bargain collectively is the best way to ensure that the voices of providers are heard and childcare standards are improved in the State of Connecticut.

Terry Forde
256 Hillhurst Ave.
New Britain, CT 06053